

International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (Basic Instrument for the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT))

Basic Instrument

International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (TIAS 6767), 20 U.S.T. 2887, 1969, which was signed on May 14, 1966.

Implementing Legislation

Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA) of 1975 (16 U.S.C. 971 *et. seq.*)

Members

There are currently 49 Contracting Parties: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Cape Verde, China (People's Republic), Côte d'Ivoire, Curaçao, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, European Union (EU), France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon), Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea (Republic of), Honduras, Iceland, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Liberia, Libya, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Russian Federation, Sao Tome and Principe, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa (Republic of), Syria, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom (in respect of its overseas territories), United States, Uruguay, Vanuatu, and Venezuela.

Commission Headquarters

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Budget

The Commission's Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (STACFAD) approves a biennial budget during each regular meeting of the Commission. ICCAT's financial situation has been strong in recent years. At its 2013 Annual Meeting, the Commission adopted a budget of 3,122,635 Euros for 2014 and 3,199,888 Euros for 2015. The U.S. contribution is 161,614 Euros for 2014 and 165,565 Euros for 2015. The United States and other ICCAT members have also periodically provided extra-budgetary funds to ICCAT to support various initiatives, including ICCAT's data fund for the improvement of ICCAT statistics. A meeting participation fund makes financial support available to ensure the attendance of developing State members to various scientific and non-scientific ICCAT meetings.. Monies to support for this fund have been provided from voluntary contributions and from ICCAT's Working Capital Fund. At the 2013 Annual Meeting it was agreed that € 100,000 from the Working Capital fund should be transferred to the Meeting Participation Fund for 2014. In addition, in 2013, ICCAT adopted an EU proposal to establish a Scientific Capacity Building Fund for Developing Coastal States [Rec. 13-19].

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

ATCA provides that not more than three Commissioners shall represent the United States in ICCAT. Commissioners are appointed by the President and serve 3-year terms. Of the three U.S. Commissioners, one can be a salaried employee of any state or political subdivision thereof, or of the Federal Government. The Government Commissioner is not limited in the number of terms that he or she can serve. Of the two Commissioners who are not government employees, one must have knowledge and experience regarding commercial fishing in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico or Caribbean Sea and the other must have similar knowledge and experience regarding recreational fishing. Non-Government Commissioners are not eligible to serve more than two consecutive 3-year terms.

B. U.S. Commissioners:

Government

Mr. Russell F. Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
International Fisheries, NOAA
HCHB, 14th & Constitution Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20230-0001

Recreational

Ms. Ellen Peel

Commercial

Mr. Eugenio Piñeiro-Soler

C. Advisory Structure:

The U.S. Commissioners are required, under ATCA, to constitute an Advisory Committee to the U.S. National Section to ICCAT. This body shall, to the maximum extent practicable, consist of an equitable balance among the various groups concerned with the fisheries covered by the Convention and is exempt from the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The Committee consists of (1) “not less than five nor more than twenty individuals appointed by the United States Commissioners who shall select such individuals from the various groups concerned with the fisheries covered by the Convention” and (2) the Chairs (or their designees) of the New England, Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils (FMCs). Public Committee members serve 2-year terms and are eligible for reappointment. The Committee generally consists of the maximum 20 public members and the five FMC representatives.

Upon approval of the Committee and the Department of State, the directors (or their designees) of the fisheries agencies of each of the states, the residents of which maintain a highly migratory species fishery in the regulatory area of the Convention, may be invited to serve as *ex officio* members of the Committee. The Advisory Committee is invited to attend all non-executive meetings of the U.S. Commissioners and, at such meetings, shall have the opportunity to examine and to be heard on all proposed programs of investigation, reports, recommendations, and regulations of the Commission.

ATCA also provides that the Commissioners may establish species working groups for the purpose of providing advice and recommendations to the Commissioners and to the Advisory Committee on matters relating to the conservation and management of any highly migratory species covered by the Convention. Any species working group shall consist of no more than seven members of the Advisory Committee and no more than four scientific or technical personnel. The Commissioners have established the following five working groups: billfish, swordfish, sharks, bluefin tuna, and BAYS (bigeye, albacore, yellowfin, and skipjack) tunas.

The Chairman of the Advisory Committee is Dr. John Graves, The College of William and Mary, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, School of Marine Science, Gloucester Point, VA 23062. The Committee’s Executive Secretary is Rachel O’Malley, Office of International Affairs, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The Committee meets at least twice a year, usually in Silver Spring, Maryland. The Committee’s Statement of Operating Practices and Procedures is available from its Executive Secretary.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

ICCAT was established to provide an effective program of international cooperation in research and conservation in recognition of the unique problems related to the highly migratory nature of tunas and tuna-like species. The Convention area is defined as all waters of the Atlantic Ocean, including the adjacent seas. The Commission is responsible for providing internationally coordinated research on the condition of Atlantic tuna and tuna-like species, and their environment, as well as for the development of regulatory recommendations. The objective of such regulatory recommendations is to conserve and manage species of tuna and tuna-like species throughout their range in a manner that maintains their population at levels that will permit the maximum sustainable catch.

B. Organizational Structure:

ICCAT is comprised of (1) a commission, (2) a council, (3) an executive secretary, and (4) subject area panels. The Commission consists of not more than three delegates from each Contracting Party. The Council, if established, is an elected body within the Commission consisting of a chairman, vice-chairman, and representatives of not less than four nor more than eight Contracting Parties and which performs such functions as are assigned to it by the Convention or Commission. Although the Council is supposed to meet at least once between regular meetings (which occur every other year), since 1978 Special Meetings of the Commission have been held in lieu of meetings of the Council.

The Executive Secretary is responsible for coordinating the programs of investigation, preparing budget estimates, disbursing funds and accounting for expenditures; preparing the collection and analysis of data to accomplish the purposes of the Convention; and preparing scientific, administrative, and other reports for approval by the Commission.

Panels are established by the Commission and are responsible for review of the species under their purview; collection of scientific and other information; proposing conservation recommendations for joint actions; and recommending studies by the Contracting Parties. Currently, Panel 1 covers tropical tunas (bigeye, yellowfin, and skipjack). Panel 2 covers North Atlantic temperate tunas (northern bluefin and albacore). Panel 3 covers South Atlantic temperate tunas (southern bluefin and albacore). Finally, Panel 4 covers other species, including swordfish, billfishes, sharks, and other species.

ICCAT has established five standing committees as follows: (1) the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), (2) the Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (STACFAD), (3) the Conservation and Management Measures Compliance Committee (COC), (4) the Permanent Working Group for the Improvement of ICCAT Statistics and Conservation Measures (PWG), and (5) the Standing Working Group to Promote Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers [see Rec. 13-18].

C. Programs:

The Commission concerns itself with (1) joint planning of research, coordination of research carried on by agencies of the Parties in accordance with its plans, and joint evaluation of the results of such research; (2) the collection and analysis of statistical information relating to the condition of fishery resources in the Convention area; and (3) joint formulation of regulatory recommendations for submission to the Parties.

Recommendations adopted by the Commission are submitted to contracting governments for acceptance. These recommendations become effective for all Parties to the Convention six months after their formal submission to all Parties (unless otherwise stated) provided objections are not made during that period by concerned contracting governments. Each Contracting Party has the responsibility for implementing and enforcing the Commission's recommended conservation and management measures.

Additional information:

The proceedings of ICCAT's annual meetings and a complete accounting of all ICCAT conservation and management measures, including those related to compliance issues, can be found on the ICCAT website (www.ICCAT.int). Recommendations (binding) and resolutions (non-binding) are available at: <http://www.iccat.int/en/RecsRegs.asp>.

Panel 1 - Bigeye, Yellowfin and Skipjack Tunas

Bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack are tropical tunas most often found as mixed stocks in their juvenile phase. Mature fish are known to migrate across the Atlantic where they are important components of the fisheries of various countries, including the United States. The high proportion of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin catches by some surface fleets and the consequent impacts on yields has remained a concern for many years.

The latest assessment of bigeye tuna (2010) estimated that relative biomass and the relative fishing mortality rate are very close to the levels associated with maximum sustainable yield (MSY), although there is considerable uncertainty in the assessment of stock status and productivity for bigeye. Yellowfin tuna was assessed in 2011, and the SCRS estimated that the stock was overfished but overfishing was not occurring. Skipjack tuna was last assessed in 2008. While the results were uncertain, the SCRS found that skipjack stocks in both the East Atlantic and West Atlantic are most likely not overfished and not subject to overfishing. An assessment of eastern and western Atlantic skipjack stocks is scheduled for 2014.

In 2011, ICCAT adopted Recommendation 11-01 that:

- maintained the annual total allowable catch (TAC) for bigeye tuna at 85,000 mt, consistent with scientific advice as well as catch and capacity limits for major harvesters;
- provided additional protection for juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tunas by substantially increasing the size and duration of the Gulf of Guinea time and area closure with respect to fishing vessels using fish aggregating devices (FADs);
- strengthened monitoring and control measures for the Gulf of Guinea fishery, including by developing and requiring implementation of an enhanced port sampling program and establishing an ICCAT-run regional observer program to enhance data quality and compliance. Due to operational issues, however, ICCAT delayed implementation of the regional observer program until the 2015 season. In the meantime, fishery participants are to deploy national observers;
- established new reporting obligations, including submission of FAD management plans and lists of authorized and active vessels, and, in 2013, ICCAT expanded reporting requirements for those tropical tuna fisheries using FADs [Rec 13-01] to improve data collection and allow the SCRS to better characterize the fishing effort associated with FAD fishing;
- established an annual TAC for yellowfin tuna of 110,000 mt beginning in 2012, which will be revisited if total catches exceed the TAC.

In addition, SCRS is beginning to implement a large-scale tagging program for tropical tunas to improve knowledge about tropical tuna species, including with regard to basic biological parameters.

Panel 2 - North Atlantic Bluefin Tuna and Albacore:

Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna: At its 1998 meeting, ICCAT adopted a rebuilding program for Western Atlantic bluefin tuna with the goal of reaching MSY in 20 years. This was the first time that ICCAT articulated a rebuilding goal to guide its management actions and adopted a plan for achieving that goal. The initial annual TAC established under the program was 2,500 mt, inclusive of dead discards. The rebuilding program provided flexibility to alter the TAC, the MSY target, and/or the rebuilding period based upon subsequent scientific advice. The TAC, shared by the United States, Japan, Canada, the United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda), France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon), and Mexico has been adjusted periodically since 1998 and other elements of the rebuilding program have also been altered, such as the tolerance for recreational catches of bluefin tuna weighing less than 30 kg (the current minimum size in the west).

Since 2008 the TAC for western bluefin tuna has been steadily reduced in keeping with scientific advice. In 2010, based on scientific advice, ICCAT adopted a measure that reduced the TAC from 1,800 mt to 1,750 mt for 2011 and 2012, incorporated the three minor harvesters (UK-Bermuda, France-St. Pierre and Miquelon, and Mexico) into the allocation table at their current quota levels, added some reporting obligations (in particular a requirement to provide provisional monthly catch reports to the Secretariat), and continued a bilateral quota transfer arrangement from Mexico to Canada (i.e., 86.5 mt in both 2011 and 2012) first agreed upon in 2008. In 2012, ICCAT adopted a one-year measure (Rec 12-02) that maintained the TAC (1,750 mt) and the allocation key and most other aspects of the previous recommendation. It also established an absolute minimum size consistent with current U.S. regulations and a requirement that transfer of quota underharvest be used to support cooperative research under the Atlantic-Wide Bluefin Tuna Research Program. In 2013, ICCAT adopted Recommendation 13-09 that once again rolled over the main provisions of the previous measure, retaining the 1750 mt TAC for 2014. This recommendation also called for the development of research plans aimed at improving existing stock abundance indices and/or developing new indices for bluefin tuna of western origin. Each Contracting Party, where practical,

will develop a research plan by April 30, 2014. Scientists will exchange views on the plans prior to the 2nd meeting of the Working Group of Fishery Managers and Scientists in Support of the Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Stock Assessment, to be held in July 2014.

Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin Tuna: ICCAT began adopting measures to limit harvests of eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna, including TACs and country specific quotas, in the mid to late 1990s due to concerns about the status of the stock. The United States has long urged the adoption of strong conservation measures in the east in particular due to the growing evidence of stock mixing. For many years, eastern harvesters failed to follow scientific advice on TAC levels and other actions and largely failed to effectively implement measures that were agreed. This situation began to change in the late 2000s.

In 2008, ICCAT adopted a substantially strengthened recommendation for the eastern fishery that included a reduction in TAC, extension of the Mediterranean time and area closure, freezing and reductions of fleet capacity, and freezing of farming capacity. New monitoring and control measures were also introduced, including a regional observer program for large-scale purse seine vessels, a ban on at-sea transshipment, a revised boarding and inspection regime, and enhanced control and reporting measures for caging transfer activities. Significantly, the measure also required all parties to establish individual vessel quotas for their fleets. In 2009, ICCAT adopted a further reduction in the TAC to 13,500 mt, which was below the 15,000 mt TAC recommended by the SCRS and agreed to establish new management measures 2010 annual meeting aimed at rebuilding the stock by the end of 2022 with at least a 60% probability. The measure also extended the length of the purse seine time and area closure in the Mediterranean, required further reductions in fishing capacity by 2013, and limited the level of joint fishing operations.

At the 2010 annual meeting, ICCAT confirmed its goal of achieving B_{MSY} with at least 60% probability by 2022 and reduced the TAC again (to 12,900 mt). Recommendation 10-04 also established a new allocation arrangement and tightened monitoring and control measures for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean fishery, including requiring the placement of observers on towing vessels that deliver bluefin tuna to farms. Available information has indicated that compliance with ICCAT rules in the eastern bluefin tuna fishery has improved substantially over the last five years and total catches in this fishery have remained at or below the TAC. In 2012, following a new assessment, ICCAT adopted Recommendation 12-02. The established TAC for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna was 13,400 mt. Algeria was granted an extra, temporary allocation of 100 mt for 2013 and 2014 to address the reduction of its historical quota, bringing the effective TAC to 13,500 mt, which was in line with scientific advice. Recommendation 12-03 also shifted the purse seine fishing season later by one week and included improvements to MCS provisions, including mandatory use of stereoscopic cameras in transfers during caging and farming operations and improvements to the high seas boarding and inspection scheme. A new measure (Recommendation 13-07) adopted in 2013 maintains the annual TAC for the eastern fishery at 13,400 mt and continues other provisions governing the fishery. The Commission also adopted a proposal in 2013 to establish a standardized protocol and common procedures for implementation of stereoscopic cameras in the eastern Atlantic/Mediterranean bluefin caging operations by 2014 [Rec 13-08]. An assessment update will be conducted in 2014 for both stocks of bluefin tuna, with the next full assessment scheduled for 2015. The 2015 assessment, however, is expected to be delayed until 2016 given the heavy workload of SCRS.

Research: In 2008, the Commission, recognizing the usefulness of biological samples in the understanding of bluefin tuna movement patterns and resolving issues associated with stock origin, spawning site fidelity, and mixing, adopted a resolution encouraging parties to consider making a portion of BFT quota available, consistent with domestic obligations, conservation considerations, and a bona fide research plan, to collect otoliths for microconstituent analyses and samples for genetic studies. In further support of bluefin tuna research, ICCAT adopted a recommendation in 2011 that establishes a research quota of 20 mt to be utilized in support of ICCAT's Atlantic-Wide Bluefin Tuna Research Program multi-year program of research on bluefin tuna stock structure, abundance, and other important scientific questions.

Northern Albacore: At its 1998 meeting, ICCAT adopted a measure to limit fishing capacity in the northern albacore fishery. This action was intended to prevent further increases in fishing mortality given scientific advice at the time, which considered that the stock was close to full exploitation. A TAC and other management measures were first adopted for the stock in 2000. Based on the 2009 stock assessment that indicated the stock was overfished with overfishing occurring, the Commission adopted a rebuilding program that included a 28,000 mt TAC aimed at recovering the stock by 2020. In 2013, the Commission agreed to maintain the 28,000 mt TAC for 2014 through 2016 [Rec 13-05]. The U.S. quota of 527 mt was retained, and CPCs may continue to carryover 25% of their initial quota (to be used within two years from the year of catch).

In addition, SCRS is to continue to develop a limit reference point and harvest control rules for this stock with input from the Commission to inform and guide future management decisions.

Panel 3 - South Atlantic Bluefin Tuna and Albacore:

Southern Bluefin Tuna: No management measures have been established by ICCAT for southern bluefin tuna. This stock is distributed among the Indian, Pacific, and Atlantic Oceans. Stocks are assessed and managed by the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tunas (CCSBT). Given the overlap of distribution of this species between the Convention areas of both ICCAT and CCSBT, ICCAT will, as appropriate, collaborate in scientific work of CCSBT regarding this species and monitor its management.

Southern Albacore: ICCAT adopted management measures for southern albacore for the first time in 1994. Southern albacore was managed under a multi-year management measure from 2005-11 that included a TAC but no country specific quota allocations for the major (i.e., active) fishing parties (i.e., Chinese Taipei, South Africa, Namibia, Brazil and Uruguay). Instead, near-real time reporting requirements were instituted for the active fishing parties so the fishery could be closed if the TAC was reached. In 2011, a new management measure reduced the TAC to 24,000 mt, in line with scientific advice, and, for the first time, established a sharing arrangement amongst the major harvesters. The stock was most recently assessed in 2013, and the scientific advice called for lowering the TAC. ICCAT, however, maintained the 24,000 mt TAC for 2014-2016—in part to accommodate growth in the fishery by some participants, such as Japan. Significantly, the new recommendation ended the previous sharing arrangement, which had provided aspirational individual catch limits to the developing coastal states actively fishing for southern albacore that in total exceeded previous TAC levels, and instead established hard quota limits [Rec 13-06].

Panel 4 - Swordfish, Billfish, Sharks, and Other Species:

North Atlantic Swordfish: Concern about the status of North Atlantic swordfish led ICCAT to begin management of this stock around 1990. Initial management actions were not successful in stemming the decline of the resource and a rebuilding program was developed and adopted by ICCAT in 1999. Specifically, ICCAT parties committed to rebuild North Atlantic swordfish to the biomass that would produce MSY within 10 years, with a greater than 50 percent probability. Among other things, the North Atlantic swordfish rebuilding program included a TAC and country specific quota allocations. Only seven years into the 10-year rebuilding program, the stock was almost completely rebuilt. ICCAT adopted adjustments to its rebuilding program in the late 2000s, including increasing the TAC in line with scientific advice and providing greater access to the resource for some ICCAT members—largely due to U.S. flexibility. A stock assessment in 2009 concluded that the stock was fully rebuilt but scientific advice called for a modest reduction in the TAC. As a consequence, the TAC was reduced to 13,700 mt. At its 2010 meeting, ICCAT adopted a one-year extension (Rec 10-02) and provided several developing states with an allocation from the TAC (rather than fishery access based on allocations from available underharvest); Rec. 10-02 also included a requirement that all parties submit annual fishery management/development plans. These plans include information on the history of their fishery, monitoring and control measures, and how they take into account ecosystem considerations. Information from these plans were to help inform future North Atlantic swordfish management discussions.

In 2011, ICCAT adopted a two-year management measure that extended the 13,700 mt TAC and preserved the current catch limit for U.S. fishermen. It also included, among other things, a strengthened provision to ensure the TAC would not be exceeded and allowed implementation of an alternative approach for calculating the minimum size (cleithrum-keel, rather than lower jaw-fork length), which better reflects how the U.S. fishery operates and thus reduce discard levels. At the 2013 ICCAT meeting, the 13,700 mt TAC was extended for another 2 years (2014-2016) in Recommendation 13-02. In both the recommendations adopted in 2011 and 2013, various temporary quota transfers were authorized. In addition, the SCRS will consider the interim limit reference point of 0.4Bmsy or any more robust limit reference point established through further analysis when assessing the status of North Atlantic swordfish and providing advice to the Commission in 2016. SCRS and the Commission will also begin a dialogue in 2014 to allow for the development of harvest control rules for the stock for consideration in future management decisions.

South Atlantic Swordfish: The Commission established management measures for South Atlantic swordfish for the first time in 1994. Measures adopted over the years limited countries to catch levels consistent with certain reference years; later, an annual TAC and country specific allocations were established. The recommendation adopted in 2006 set the TAC at the scientifically recommended 17,000 mt, but authorized removals of 17,475 mt in 2007 and 2008 and 17,440 mt in 2009. To

help ensure that the TAC would not be exceeded, a provision required the Commission to adjust catch limits as necessary and appropriate so the overall catch for the period (51,000 mt) would not be exceeded. As some parties were not catching their full quotas, this provision was not needed.

In 2009, a scientifically based TAC of 15,000 mt was established for 2010-2013 with a cap of 45,000 mt over the three-year plan. The United States retained its 100 mt quota as well as its ability to carry forward up to 100 mt of underharvest, but agreed, together with other parties, to transfer some underharvest to developing ICCAT members. In 2012, this measure was extended for one year. In 2013, the Commission agreed to extend the TAC of 15,000 t for 2014-2016 [Rec 13-03]. The measure maintained the provision that allows the United States to carry over the entire amount of its base quota allocation of 100 t. Quota transfers from the United States of 50 t to Namibia, 25 t to Cote D'Ivoire and 25 t to Belize were maintained.

Mediterranean Swordfish: Following a stock assessment in 2003, the Commission adopted a recommendation that required Contracting Parties to take the necessary measures to reduce the mortality of juvenile swordfish in the Mediterranean. The recommendation also prohibited the use of driftnets in fisheries for large pelagics in the Mediterranean. In 2007, SCRS found that the stock was still overfished with overfishing occurring and high juvenile mortality. An EU proposal for a seasonal closure from October 15 – November 15 was adopted by the Commission in 2007 and extended by 1 month (October 1 – November 30) in 2008. In 2009, ICCAT adopted additional reporting and monitoring requirements, including a fishing vessel register for the Mediterranean swordfish fleet, and requested that SCRS evaluate the effectiveness of the time/area closure. In 2010, although a new stock assessment confirmed that the stock was still overfished and that overfishing was occurring, no new measures were adopted. In 2011, ICCAT adopted an additional one month time/area closure, a minimum size for retained fish, and gear limitations, but the measure still fell short of the scientific advice. Following another assessment in 2013, a new recommendation was adopted that retained all the provisions of the previous recommendation and made one technical correction (Rec. 13-04).

Billfishes: At its 1995 meeting, the Commission adopted a resolution focusing on the enhancement of research programs for billfish and calling for voluntary release or tag and release by commercial as well as recreational fishermen. In 1996, the Commission passed a resolution to encourage actions to facilitate the recovery of billfishes, including the use of monofilament leaders and improvement in catch and post-release mortality statistics.

Blue and White Marlins: At its 1997 meeting, the Commission adopted the first mandatory conservation measures for Atlantic blue marlin and white marlins in the form of a landings cap. At its 2000 meeting, the Commission determined that additional action was necessary and adopted a two-phase plan to rebuild depleted populations of Atlantic blue marlin and white marlin. This plan was amended several times over the years, including improving information on and control of artisanal fisheries. In 2011, additional reductions in allowable catch were adopted for both blue and white marlins taken by longline and purse seine vessels. Spearfish were explicitly included as part of the white marlin species complex per SCRS advice, and the SCRS was tasked with evaluating possible time/area closures. The SCRS and the Secretariat were also directed to review existing data and information collection programs for artisanal billfish fisheries, including those of other regional and sub-regional fisheries management organizations, and to develop a plan to improve data collection in these fisheries. While the results of this work was to be presented in 2013, it was not complete and additional effort is being undertaken in 2014. In 2012, ICCAT adopted a recommendation that established an overall landings limit for each stock with country-specific quotas, which are expected to result in mortality reductions consistent with scientific advice. The measure also set an Atlantic-wide recreational minimum size for marlins and banned the sale of recreationally caught marlins.

Sailfish: In 2009, SCRS conducted a sailfish assessment and expressed concern over incomplete reporting of catches. SCRS recommended that catches of the eastern stock be reduced and that current catches of the western stock not be exceeded. ICCAT considered conservation and management measures for sailfish in 2009, 2010, and 2012, but no consensus could be reached. SCRS will prepare data in 2014 to conduct a new stock assessment for sailfish in 2015.

Sharks: At the 2004 ICCAT meeting, U.S. leadership resulted in adoption of a binding management measure for sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT. The decision was taken by consensus and was the first time ICCAT ever asserted management authority over sharks. To address the issue of shark finning, a major component of the measure was to require full utilization of shark catches. Fishermen must retain all parts of the shark except the head, guts, and skins to the point of first landing. Countries were required to ensure that their vessels retain onboard fins that total no more than 5% by weight of sharks onboard up to the first point of landing. The 2004 agreement also (1) established requirements for data collection on catches of sharks, (2) called for research on shark nursery areas, and (3) encouraged the release of live sharks,

especially juveniles. To increase the effectiveness of the 2004 measure, ICCAT considered a joint Belize/U.S./Brazil proposal to require sharks to be landed with their fins naturally attached in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013. Consensus on this measure could not be reached, but a growing consensus for this approach was reflected in an increased number of co-sponsors. The proposal is expected to be considered again in 2014.

In 2007, ICCAT adopted a measure that requires data collection on bycatch of and targeted fisheries for sharks, measures to reduce fishing mortality on porbeagle and shortfin mako sharks until assessments determine sustainable harvest levels, research on pelagic sharks and consideration of time-area closures, and an assessment of porbeagle sharks. Additional management measures were considered by ICCAT regarding porbeagle sharks in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013, but consensus could not be reached. In 2011, the Commission adopted a measure on shortfin mako that reinforced the existing requirements to reduce mortality on the North Atlantic stock of this species and required reporting on actions taken in this regard for review by the Compliance Committee. The adopted measure also underscored obligations to report data on shortfin mako stocks to SCRS and further prohibits parties that do not report catch and effort data from being allowed to retain this species. Citing the uncertainties associated with the 2012 assessment for shortfin mako, as well as the high level of vulnerability of this species as reflected in the Ecological Risk Assessment conducted in 2012, a measure to establish country-specific landings limits was proposed in 2011, 2012, and 2013, but consensus could not be reached.

In 2008, the Commission adopted a measure requiring bigeye thresher caught alive in ICCAT fisheries to be released. At the 2009 meeting, ICCAT adopted a proposal that prohibits the retention of bigeye thresher sharks in all fisheries, with an exception for Mexico's small-scale coastal catch of less than 110 fish. At the 2010 meeting, Mexico noted it would not avail itself of this exception.

In 2010, ICCAT adopted a measure that prohibits retention of oceanic whitetip sharks caught in association with ICCAT fisheries and requires parties to collect and report the number of discards and releases of this species. Also in 2010, ICCAT adopted a recommendation that prohibits retention of all species of hammerhead sharks (with the exception of bonnethead sharks) that are caught in association with ICCAT fisheries with limited exceptions for developing countries that retain hammerhead sharks for local consumption. Parties taking advantage of this exception must ensure that these sharks and their parts do not enter international trade.

In 2011, the SCRS recognized silky sharks as the most vulnerable shark to ICCAT fisheries. A measure was adopted that required the release of silky sharks caught in association with ICCAT fisheries and the prohibition of retention on board, transshipment, and landing of the species. Limited exceptions were provided for developing coastal states that retain silky sharks for food as well as for parties that prohibit silky shark fisheries, whose domestic law requires all dead fish be landed, and whose law prohibits fishermen from realizing any commercial profit from such fish. Parties not reporting species-specific data for sharks were required to submit a data collection improvement plan.

To facilitate species identification, the SCRS completed a shark identification guide in 2011 as requested by the Commission, which has been made widely available. The Commission adopted a recommendation in 2012 that requires reporting on implementation of and compliance with existing shark conservation and management measures to assist the Compliance Committee in its review. In 2013, the Commission adopted a proposal to provide for the biological sampling of shark species that are currently prohibited from retention in ICCAT fisheries, including oceanic whitetip, bigeye thresher, silky and scalloped, smooth and great hammerhead sharks and that are dead at haulback. ICCAT members wanting to retain these prohibited shark species for scientific sampling must notify SCRS and report annually on the progress and/or results achieved through the research.

Bycatch and Discards:

Sea Turtles: In 2003, the Commission adopted a non-binding resolution that encouraged all parties to provide information on interactions with sea turtles in the ICCAT Convention area—in particular, the bycatch of sea turtles in ICCAT fisheries. At the 2010 meeting, ICCAT adopted a binding measure that requires the following: (1) purse seine vessels avoid encircling sea turtles to the extent practicable and release turtles that are encircled or entangled, including on FADs; (2) that pelagic longline vessels carry on board safe handling, disentangling and release equipment capable of releasing sea turtles in a manner that maximizes the probability of survival; and (3) that fishermen on pelagic longline vessels use the equipment and be trained in its proper use. In addition, SCRS is to advise the Commission on approaches for mitigating sea turtle bycatch in ICCAT fisheries for appropriate action by the Commission based on data and information to be compiled by the ICCAT Secretariat, including that provided by ICCAT members, no later than 2012.

In 2013, the Commission adopted a proposal that provides additional specificity in safe handling practices required for incidentally caught sea turtles (e.g., concerning best practices for the use of line cutters and de-hooking devices). The measures contained in Rec 13-11 are already required by the United States in its commercial Atlantic HMS fisheries. This proposal was adopted with the understanding that complete results from the SCRS ecological risk assessment for sea turtles are expected in 2014.

Seabirds: At the 2002 Commission meeting, ICCAT adopted a resolution that, among other things, urged parties to inform SCRS and the Commission of the status of their National Plans of Action for Reducing Incidental Catches of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (NPOA-Seabirds) and to implement such plans, where appropriate. In 2007, ICCAT adopted a binding measure regarding seabird bycatch mitigation measures. The measure required use of tori lines on vessels fishing south of 20 degrees South or line weighting, and specified that the Commission shall consider adoption of additional measures to mitigate seabird bycatch based on the 2008 SCRS assessment of the impact of ICCAT fisheries on seabirds. In 2009 an effort was made to adopt a revised seabird proposal but consensus could not be reached. In 2011, however, ICCAT did adopt a revised seabird recommendation calling for new protections for seabirds in waters south of 25°S. The measure requires use of at least two mitigation measures (night setting, bird scaring lines, or line weighting). The previous ICCAT rules that mandated the use of bird scaring lines (tori poles) or night setting with swivel weights to ensure optimal sink rates still apply between 20 and 25°S.

Sargasso Sea: In 2012, ICCAT adopted a resolution jointly proposed by the EU, South Africa, UK (Overseas Territories), and the United States that calls on SCRS to consider the importance of the Sargasso Sea to tuna and tuna-like species and ecologically associated species, and present its findings to the Commission in 2015.

Other: In 2011, ICCAT adopted a measure intended to harmonize requirements for parties to collect data on bycatch and discards and report this information to ICCAT, including a provision to allow developing coastal States with artisanal fisheries to develop alternative methods for such data collection.

Permanent Working Group (PWG):

Terms of reference for the PWG were revised in 2011. The PWG focuses on reviewing the implementation of technical measures, particularly monitoring, control, and surveillance measures, with a view to improving their effectiveness through revision or other means and, where needed, on developing new measures.

Trade Measures. Each year the Commission undertakes a review of fishery related activities in the Convention Area. This annual review has resulted in the identification of a number of countries and, in some cases, the implementation of sanctions, including trade restrictive measures. When the problem has been rectified, ICCAT has lifted these sanctions. ICCAT was the first regional fishery management organization to adopt such instruments and to use trade measures to support conservation goals.

Through 2003, much of the work of the PWG was guided by the Bluefin Tuna and Swordfish Action Plan Resolutions (Action Plans) and the Unregulated and Unreported Catches Resolution (UU Catches Resolution), which were adopted to promote cooperation with ICCAT conservation measures. The Resolutions established mechanisms by which multilateral trade measures could be imposed against parties deemed to be diminishing the effectiveness of the ICCAT conservation measures for ICCAT species under certain circumstances.

In 2003, ICCAT took a decisive step and broadened its regime of trade restrictive measures by adopting a comprehensive trade resolution—thereby replacing the Action Plans and the UU Catches Resolution. This resolution applied to all fisheries and all parties (both ICCAT members and non-members), established a more transparent process for the application of trade restrictive measures, and used comparable standards for evaluating fishery related activities. In addition, the resolution allowed for swift re-imposition of trade sanctions in cases where parties recently released from sanctions acted in bad faith and again engaged in problem fishing activities. This comprehensive approach was intended to bolster ICCAT's already significant efforts to eliminate IUU fishing in the ICCAT Convention Area. In 2006, ICCAT adopted a revised trade instrument. Most significantly, the new measure converted the instrument from a non-binding resolution to a binding recommendation. It was also expanded to explicitly cover farming activities.

Catch and Trade Document Programs

Bluefin Tuna Trade/Catch Tracking: In 1992, the Commission adopted the Bluefin Tuna Statistical Document (BSD) program, which required the use of an ICCAT-accepted reporting system to monitor trade in fresh and frozen bluefin tuna. In 2007, ICCAT moved from a statistical document program to a catch documentation scheme (CDS) for bluefin tuna. This program allows tracking of bluefin tuna product from the point of capture through to its final market with the aim of improving control and compliance in the eastern bluefin fishery. This was a major change designed to improve the monitoring of harvests from and data reporting for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishery. The United States participates in the program but, along with other countries that have programs whereby each individual fish is tagged and equivalent data are collected, is exempt from some of its provisions—in particular, government validation requirements. Revisions to the BCD program have been agreed numerous times over the years to clarify ambiguities, improve its functionality, and ease implementation for certain ICCAT members. Particular efforts have been made to assist parties in identifying the source and destination of bluefin tuna, especially those that farm or import live tuna, including prohibiting the co-mingling of catches made by vessels of different flags and to allow caged product to be covered by a grouped BCD in certain instances.

Notably, in 2011, ICCAT parties agreed on next steps to implement an electronic BCD (eBCD), which is expected to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the program and further assist in the fight against IUU fishing. In 2012, a recommendation specified that the electronic BCD program would be technically operational by May 2013, but provided that paper BCDs would be accepted until the end of February 2014. IT issues required a delay in the development and implementation schedule, and ICCAT adopted a new timeline for implementation of the eBCD system at its 2013 meeting. By May 16, 2014, countries are to notify ICCAT if they will use the electronic system or continue to use paper during the transition period leading up to the March 1, 2015, deadline for full implementation. An electronic BCD technical manual is under development.

Swordfish and Bigeye Tuna Trade Tracking. ICCAT first adopted statistical document programs for swordfish (fresh and frozen) and bigeye tuna (frozen only) in 2001. A primary purpose of the programs has been to improve the reliability of statistical information on catches of these species, particularly in regards to non-Contracting Parties, since some of these nations do not provide catch data to ICCAT. ICCAT's statistical document programs track trade and provide information on the flag state and name of the harvesting vessel, the location of harvest, the point of export, a description of the fish in the shipment, etc. These statistical document programs have contributed to ICCAT's review of fishery activities under the trade recommendation. In recognition of the changing needs of the Commission, ICCAT agreed to begin a process in 2013 to consider the development of catch certification programs for other ICCAT species.

Monitoring and Control: ICCAT has a number of measures in effect relating to monitoring and control. Moreover, ICCAT has held several meetings of its Working Group on Integrated Monitoring and Control Measures (IMM), a group established to review ICCAT's monitoring and control measures with a view to strengthen them and fill gaps where necessary. Three recommendations developed by the working group were adopted at the 2003 annual meeting on the following topics: flag state duties, vessel monitoring systems (VMS), and basic data collection for fishing vessels authorized to fish for species managed by ICCAT. In 2005 ICCAT adopted a measure establishing a centralized at sea transshipment observer program, which was revised in 2012. This program requires that at sea transshipment can only be undertaken by large scale longline vessels and only if an ICCAT observer is onboard the carrier vessel. For the eastern bluefin tuna fishery, ICCAT has adopted a centralized VMS program with financing by participating nations. At the 2008 Commission meeting, ICCAT included a centralized regional observer program in the adopted revisions to the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna rebuilding plan. The observer program includes elements of compliance as well as scientific data collection. A similar program was adopted for the bigeye and yellowfin fishery in 2012, although implementation has been delayed until 2015.

At the 2010 annual meeting, ICCAT adopted a U.S. proposal establishing minimum standards for national observer programs, which will help to ensure that important scientific information is collected in ICCAT fisheries. In particular, parties must ensure at least 5% coverage on their purse seine, pelagic longline, and baitboat fleets using an effort measurement rather than by number of vessels. In 2012, ICCAT adopted new minimum standards for inspections in port to be more consistent with the 2009 FAO Port State Measures Agreement.

In 2013, ICCAT adopted a number of MCS measures that were important U.S. priorities, including three proposals that were initiated or co-sponsored by the United States. These included (1) amendments to ICCAT's authorized list of large scale vessels [Rec. 11-20] to require eligible vessels to obtain an IMO/LR numbers as a condition of listing and a prerequisite to being able to fish for ICCAT species; (2) amendments to ICCAT's chartering recommendation [Rec. 02-21] to strengthen

observer requirements; and (3) model forms for use in port inspections pursuant to ICCAT's port inspection recommendation [Rec. 12-07]. Other MCS proposals were considered by ICCAT in 2013 but did not achieve consensus. They are expected to be discussed at the 2014 intersessional meeting of ICCAT's Integrated Monitoring Measures Working Group in July 2014. These include amendments to ICCAT's minimum standards for vessel monitoring systems, provisions to strengthen access agreement reporting requirements, further development of a comprehensive high seas boarding and inspection scheme to replace ICCAT's out of date at sea inspection regime, evaluation of the need for new or expanded catch/trade tracking programs, and consideration of remaining issues impacting the development and implementation of the eBCD system.

Vessel Lists. ICCAT adopted a recommendation to establish a record of authorized vessels in 2002, which was later amended to reduce the minimum size of vessels on the record from those over 24 meters to those 20 meters and above, to include new data reporting requirements and to clarify deadlines for the submission of information. Also in 2002, ICCAT adopted a recommendation to establish a list of vessels presumed to have engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities. The measure requires ICCAT members and cooperating parties to take all necessary measures to not support fishing activities by vessels on the list, including prohibiting imports, landings or transshipments of ICCAT species. Since its adoption, the IUU vessel list measure has been amended to include provisions for the intersessional removal of vessels, expand the list to ICCAT member vessels, provide for the incorporation of IUU lists of other tuna RFMOs into the ICCAT list, and to reduce the minimum length of vessels that can be listed to 12 meters. The Commission also strengthened provisions on port inspection of IUU vessels. The current authorized and IUU vessels lists can be viewed on the ICCAT website.

Compliance Committee:

The terms of reference for the Compliance Committee were revised in 2011. The Compliance Committee is focused on reviewing compliance and cooperation with ICCAT measures by members and non-members, including implementing the trade measures recommendation as appropriate. It also implements a number of recommendations designed to encourage compliance, including requirements for quota overharvests to be repaid in full within a specified timeframe and for additional quota or other penalties to be assessed for repeated quota overharvests.

For the past several years, ICCAT has focused intensively on improving the operations of the Compliance Committee. The Compliance Committee conducts an annual review of incidents of non-compliance with ICCAT statistical data requirements and management measures. The Committee also reviews allegations of non-compliance available from third party sources. Each Contracting Party is reviewed for compliance with opportunities for Parties to ask questions, provide information and clarification of the record, and submit missing information or reports. Compilation of a report card supports substantial discussion of compliance failures and promises of improvements in the future.

At its 2011 meeting, ICCAT adopted a revised recommendation developed by the Compliance Committee Chair to clarify the application of quota carry forward and payback rules. The usual systematic review was supported by the establishment of an *ad hoc* review group to assist the Compliance Committee Chair in compiling and assessing relevant information and by the pilot use of a schedule of compliance actions. This system of review continues to be implemented and has resulted in various actions, including the identification of some ICCAT members under the trade measures recommendation (Rec. 06-13). In 2012, ICCAT adopted revised guidelines for Annual Reports to the Commission designed to standardize and improve reporting by parties on how they have implemented ICCAT requirements and further facilitate the compliance review process at the ICCAT annual meeting.

No data-no fish: ICCAT adopted a measure in 2011 requiring parties to submit information on how they are meeting data reporting obligations. Recommendation 11-15 states that in cases where Task I (catch and effort) data are not reported or are not reported completely, CPCs will be prohibited from retaining the species in question until the data are sent to ICCAT. Guidelines on the application of this recommendation were developed and are appended to the 2012 meeting report.

Under the leadership of the U.S. Chair, ICCAT's Compliance Committee reviewed extensive documentation of compliance with dozens of management measures and reporting requirements in 2013, for each of ICCAT's (then) 48 parties and five parties with cooperating status. Per action taken under Rec. 11-15 ("No data, no fish"), the following parties' authorizations to fish for all ICCAT species have been suspended for 2014 until acceptable Task I data are provided: Albania, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Guinea, Honduras, and Sao Tome e Principe. Three parties were identified under the trade measures recommendation in 2013 (i.e., Angola, Honduras, Albania). They could face stronger action, including the implementation of non-discriminatory trade restrictive measures if they do not rectify the problem activities. "Letters of

Concern” will be sent to 18 other parties, including four parties whose identifications were lifted this year (i.e., Nicaragua, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Syria), for lesser infractions. Responses to ICCAT’s letters are due one month before the annual meeting.

Cooperating Parties: ICCAT continues to encourage non-members interested in ICCAT species and fisheries to become cooperating parties. Granting such status helps ICCAT expand and improve its control over the fisheries under its purview. Non-members with this status agree to abide voluntarily by ICCAT’s rules and in return receive certain benefits, such as qualifying for quota allocations and placing their vessels on the authorized vessel list. In 2003, ICCAT adopted a recommendation on criteria for attaining the status of cooperating party. This measure also outlines the type of information countries need to submit for consideration and allows for the yearly review of those in cooperating status. In 2008, the Commission expanded the ability of cooperating parties to participate in the work of the Commission, particularly with regard to enhanced speaking opportunities and more advantageous seating arrangements. In 2011, it was further agreed that cooperating non-members of ICCAT would be able to play a more active part in the work of the Commission, in particular through presenting or co-sponsoring proposals. Beginning in 2011, the Compliance Committee considered cooperating parties compliance and status, rather than PWG.

Currently, ICCAT has three cooperating non-members: Chinese Taipei (first granted in 1998), El Salvador (first granted in 2012), and Suriname (first granted in 2011). The cooperating status of Guayana (granted in 2003) was revoked in 2012 due to total lack of reporting. Guyana requested reinstatement of cooperating status but as the request was received after the deadline, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the case of Guyana until the 2014 meeting. Colombia’s cooperating status was revoked for 2014 because of a lack of data submission. Curaçao, a former cooperator, joined the Commission in 2014.

Performance Review and Future of ICCAT:

The Commission agreed to conduct a performance review of the organization in 2008 using as a minimum guide the criteria endorsed through the UNGA. Dr. Glenn Hurry, the Coordinator of the ICCAT Independent Performance Review Committee, presented the report prepared by the Committee and highlighted the following issues: modernization of the Convention, adoption of a penalty regime, strengthened ties between science and management, and the provision of more complete and accurate data. Notwithstanding, he also indicated that ICCAT has developed reasonably sound conservation and fisheries management practices, that the SCRS Panel structure is sound and that the Commission’s subsidiary bodies provide timely advice to ICCAT. The performance of the Secretariat was also considered sound and well regarded as both efficient and effective by CPCs. The Independent Performance Review Committee also considered that the SCRS carried out good work, but recognized the difficulties they faced in relation to data availability and quality.

The Chair of ICCAT suggested that the recommendations of the report be considered by relevant Panels and Committees during the meeting when adopting new management measures. The Future of ICCAT Working Group was held in 2009 and considered the results of the ICCAT performance review report. The Working Group referred the species-specific recommendations to the Panels and considered both short- and longer term solutions to various issues confronting ICCAT, including the issue of the scope of the Convention. A second working group meeting was held in 2011. While attendance was improved, many issues remained unresolved—in particular, whether or not ICCAT was to engage in a process to amend its Convention. The third meeting of the Future of ICCAT Working Group was held in 2012. It is unclear at this time whether ICCAT will continue to need this working group.

Convention Amendment:

At its 2012 annual meeting, ICCAT agreed to launch a process to develop targeted amendments to its Convention and established the terms of reference for a Convention Amendment Working Group [Rec. 12-10]. The terms of reference outline a three-year process to develop Convention amendments, which will eventually be considered by the Commission. The Commission is to develop proposed Convention amendments on the following issues, as set out in Annex 1 of the terms of reference: Convention scope, in particular shark conservation and management; decision-making processes and procedures (entry into force provisions, voting rules/quorum, objection procedures, and dispute resolution); and non-party participation. The CWG is also tasked with producing “draft recommendations or amendments to the Convention, if the draft recommendations cannot address the issue, with respect to the items identified in the Annex 2,” which include the Precautionary Approach, ecosystem considerations, capacity building and assistance, allocation of fishing possibilities, and transparency.

The first meeting of the CWG took place July 10-12, 2013, in Sapporo, Japan, and was chaired by Deirdre Warner-Kramer of the United States. Twenty parties attended the meeting. Before and during the meeting, a number of proposals were made by the United States, Japan, EU, Norway, Brazil, Turkey, and Korea. The U.S. presented a concept paper covering most of the issues to be considered at the meeting and offered proposals on general principles and dispute resolution, but no consensus was reached on Convention approaches for any issue. The Convention Working Group will meet again in 2014 and 2015 to develop Convention amendments to forward to the Commission for consideration.

Enhancing Support for Scientific Work and Processes:

In 2011, several measures were adopted that strengthen ICCAT's scientific work and processes, including the link between scientific advice and management. These include:

- *Decision Making Principles:* Taking into account 2011 intersessional work by the Future of ICCAT Working Group as well as discussions from Kobe III, ICCAT adopted a recommendation that provides guidance on conservation and management actions to be taken based on the status of the stock as reflected in the Kobe plot.
- *Best Available Science:* ICCAT adopted a resolution aimed at enhancing ICCAT's scientific process, including greater incorporation of peer review.
- *Standardization of SCRS scientific information:* ICCAT adopted a resolution that, among other things, directs the SCRS to include the Kobe matrices in its annual report for all species. In 2013, the Commission approved a resolution further clarifying issues associated with standardizing the presentation of scientific information in the SCRS annual report.

Other Issues:

Fishing Capacity: Overcapacity is a problem in many ICCAT managed fisheries as it contributes to poor stock productivity, unsatisfactory economic performance, and excessively contentious management discussions. Overcapacity may be directly responsible for overharvest in some fisheries. At the 2004 ICCAT meeting, problems associated with fish laundering and overcapacity of the Chinese Taipei fleet was of particular concern. In 2006, ICCAT adopted a proposal to establish a working group to consider the capacity issue. It met in 2007 but progress was slow. The working group met again in 2008 and forwarded a recommendation to the Commission to freeze the number and gross registered tonnage of vessels that fished for, transshipped, transported, or landed bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean between January 1, 2007 and July 1, 2008. It also called for the rapid implementation of a capacity reduction program for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fleet and a limit on the number of bluefin traps to the number authorized by each CPC as of July 1, 2008. Aspects of these recommendations were adopted in a revised rebuilding plan for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna at the 2008 Commission meeting. In 2009 and 2010, progress was reviewed and further capacity reduction requirements were adopted.

Data Confidentiality: In 2010 ICCAT adopted the SCRS proposed guidelines on data confidentiality. Adoption of these guidelines was particularly important to improve access to cannery and other data by the SCRS. The guidelines specify that parties will provide data to the extent consistent with their national confidentiality requirements, and it was noted that they may need to be revised once ICCAT has gained some experience in their application.

Elections: In 2013, ICCAT elected a new slate of Commission officers. Stefaan Depypere (EU) was elected as Commission Chair; Raul Delgado (Panama) was elected First Vice-Chair; and Andrey Krainiy (Russia) was elected Second Vice-Chair. Taoufik El Ktiri (Morocco) chairs PWG; Derek Campbell (USA) chairs the Compliance Committee; and Sylvie LaPointe (Canada) chairs STACFAD. Regarding the Panels, Cote d'Ivoire chairs Panel 1, Japan chairs Panel 2, South Africa chairs Panel 3, and Brazil chairs Panel 4. The next elections will be in 2015. In addition, Martin Tsamenyi (Ghana) was elected as Chair of the new Working Group to promote a dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers. As the term of the current Executive Secretary will end in early 2016, the Commission is expected to

2014 Annual and Intersessional Meeting:

The 19th Special Meeting of the Commission will be held November 10-17, 2014, at a location to be determined.

The Commission agreed to hold several intersessional meetings in 2014 as follows: In early March, a joint meeting of Panel 2 and the Compliance Committee to consider eastern bluefin tuna fishery plans to be held back-to-back with a special

intersessional meeting of the Permanent Working Group to consider eBCD issues; in May, back-to-back meetings of the IMM Working Group, the Convention Amendment Working Group, and the Standing Working Group of Scientists and Managers (to consider issues related to harvest control rules, target and limit reference points, and research needs and priorities); and, in July, a meeting of the western Atlantic bluefin tuna science-managers working group to consider research plans for improving/developing indicators of abundance. In addition, a meeting of the recreational working group could be held back-to-back with the western bluefin tuna meeting if sufficient data becomes available but this is unlikely. Information concerning these meetings is available at: <http://www.iccat.int/en/meetingscurrent.htm>.

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